

Marriage in the Digital Age

A Study of Zillennials' Perceptions of Marriage

Akshay Lakhanpal

Alice Pan

Sydney Drever

Yung Jan Chang

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Motivation and Background

Our research delves into the complex perceptions Zillennials, those born between the years 1990 and 2000, hold about marriage, particularly in this digital age that has radically transformed societal interactions and relationships. Sparked by the paradox of increasing loneliness amidst declining marriage rates among Zillennials, our study initially sought to explore this one-dimensional correlation. It seemed counterintuitive that in an era marked by profound loneliness, marriage rates continued to fall. This observation led us to question the underlying dynamics at play, revealing that loneliness, while significant, was merely one piece of a much larger puzzle.

Our research embarks on confirming the hypothesis that marriage rates are declining in the United States, set against the backdrop of our digital era. The study is driven by a notable decline in marriage rates among recent generations, with a particular focus on Zillennials. Esteemed institutions such as [Bowling Green University](#), the [United States Census Bureau](#), and the National Center for Family and Marriage Research have documented a significant decrease in United States marriage rates over the last decade, showing remarkable regional variations. This trend further piqued our interest, leading us to investigate the factors influencing Zillennials' views on marriage amid changing societal norms and technological advancements.

As our research evolved, we recognized the necessity to transition from a singular focus on loneliness to a broader examination of multifaceted factors influencing modern-day relationships. This shift in perspective allowed us to approach the decline in marriage rates through a more comprehensive lens, considering the myriad of reasons why individuals in long-term relationships might choose not to marry, despite not feeling lonely. Our goal is to unravel these complexities, shedding light on the nuanced views and experiences that inform Zillennials' attitudes towards marriage.

In this context, our primary stakeholders are individuals with a keen interest in understanding or exploring the concept of marriage. This includes those curious about the changing dynamics of relationships in the digital age and the factors contributing to the evolving perceptions of marriage among younger generations. Secondary stakeholders, such as sociologists, psychologists, policymakers, social media platforms, startups, and dating apps, also stand to benefit from our findings. By gaining insights into these shifting perceptions, they can better tailor their policies, designs, therapies, and business models to meet the needs and preferences of the Zillennial demographic.

Our study aims to challenge the conventional narratives that often oversimplify the decline in marriage rates to mere quantitative data. By conducting a nuanced analysis that encompasses diverse perspectives and experiences, we strive to offer a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing marriage decisions among Zillennials. Our ultimate objective is to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on contemporary relationships, providing valuable insights that enable individuals to navigate the complexities of modern romance with a deeper awareness and understanding.

Research questions

1. *What are the perceptions and assumptions of marriage held by Zillennials in the United States?*
2. *How do Zillennials in the United States use social media/technology to observe or participate in discourse about marriage?*

Methods

1. Data Collection Procedures

1.1: Online Observations

To understand online patterns and viewpoints towards marriage, our team conducted online observations across multiple social media platforms, including X/Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and Reddit. Each of the four team members engaged in at least 30 minutes of online observations on two platforms, ensuring a comprehensive review with each platform assessed by two team members (see [Appendix 1: Online Observations Data Collection](#)). Initially aiming for 80 collected posts, the team adjusted the goal to 40 posts to allow for a more in-depth analysis of the posts' comments. We aimed to collect ~8 posts per platform, to ensure a diverse sample represented various perspectives on marriage.

1.2: Interview

1:1 interviews were chosen to ensure equal expression opportunities for participants. The method's flexibility allows tailored questioning and observation of non-verbal cues, enriching insights. Importantly, the private nature of interviews addresses the sensitivity of our topic, offering a confidential space for participants to share opinions not comfortable in group settings. A semi-structured moderator guide (see [Appendix 3: Interview Script](#)) was prepared to address questions on perceptions of marriage and the use of technology to observe or participate in discourse about marriage. Interviews were conducted remotely (except for P6 – in-person). Team members aimed to create a comfortable and open environment for participants to share their thoughts on the topic. Participants were encouraged to speak freely and express their feelings. A Moderator (leading the interview) and Observer/Notetaker (muted and off camera) were present, in addition to the participant. Having an observer/notetaker present was beneficial for allowing the moderator to debrief and reflect after the session. Data from the 1:1 interviews were collected via a semi-structured interview guide, video recordings, audio recordings, audio transcriptions via Zoom live transcription or paid service (e.g., otter.ai), and written notes (e.g., post-interview thoughts/ impressions; see [Appendix 4: Interview Notes Raw Data](#)). 1:1 interview data types include unstructured text (e.g., responses to semi-structured interview questions), video, and audio.

1.3: Draw the Experience

As part of the interview, the "Draw the Experience" method is employed to elicit participants' feelings and imaginations about marriage through drawings. This approach helps identify similarities and differences in perspectives, providing nuanced insights into diverse viewpoints on marriage. The visual medium enhances emotional exploration, complementing other research methods for a comprehensive understanding. The moderator guide includes a script for team members to conduct the Draw the Experience method, including presenting examples created by team members (see [Appendix 5: Draw the Experience Example](#)). Participants were asked to visually represent their thoughts and experiences related to marriage through drawing, and participants were later asked to discuss their drawing, reflecting on their feelings toward the visual representation. Unstructured data from the "Draw the Experience" method were collected via screenshots or digital images provided by the participant (e.g., email) (see [Appendix item 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

2. Participants

2.1: Online Observations

Due to the nature of online observations, minimal to no eligibility criteria were implemented. Age group, marital status, stance on marriage, and geographic location of social media commenters were not screened for due to the limitations of screening online observations.

The team analyzed comments and content from ~40 posts across social media platforms (Reddit, Instagram, TikTok, X/Twitter, Youtube). After analyzing ~10 per platform (less for X/Twitter due to less content regarding marriage on this platform), we reached saturation in the sense that we started to see repeating themes.

2.2: 1:1 Interviews / “Draw the Experience”

We aimed to recruit and enroll 5-6 interview participants. While experts don’t agree on a specific number to reach saturation for qualitative interviews, the team believes that given the time constraints, 5-6 individuals would be a good number to aim for.

For the 1:1 interviews “Draw the Experience” methods, 17 individuals were recruited via a screener survey hosted on Google Forms (see [Appendix 7: Screener Survey](#)). Eleven individuals were screened eligible based on the following eligibility criteria:

- **Age Group:** Age 18-34 years of age (Zillennials (1990-2000)).
- **Marital Status:** Individuals who have never been married.
- **Stance on Marriage:** Individuals who have a neutral attitude towards marriage, determined by having rated a score of 2 to 4 on a 5-point scale (1 strongly disagree with marriage to 5 strongly agree with marriage).
- **Geographic Location:** Individuals living in the United States.

Screening data types include both structured text (e.g., numerical response scales) and unstructured text (e.g., name). The screener survey was posted to social media platforms by team members (e.g., LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) and within the HCDE Slack channels. Participants were recruited with the following script:

Hi all, we are looking for research participants for a ~45-minute interview as part of a research project for [my master’s program/HCDE 519 - poster can choose wording here depending on where they are posting]. The research study will involve discussing topics related to perceptions regarding marriage. The information collected will be used for academic purposes.

If you’re able to help, please complete this screener survey. This survey will help us identify participants who match the criteria for our study. Thank you for your time and consideration!

If meeting the eligibility criteria, participants were contacted to schedule an interview and provided with the Consent Form for enrollment (see [Appendix 8: Consent Form](#)). Six participants were enrolled and completed applicable study procedures.

3. Data analysis procedures

3.1: Online Observations

We analyzed collected posts via affinity mapping to identify themes, sentiments, and patterns related to marriage.

3.2: 1:1 Interviews

Our data analysis approach for the 1:1 interviews mainly utilized qualitative techniques to uncover insights from the collected data.

Coding

Initially, all four team members coded two transcripts in total (i.e., each team member individually coded one each, resulting in each transcript being coded twice). Team members then came together to affinity map all codes to identify patterns of category piles of codes (see [Appendix 9: Codebook Affinity Diagram](#)). These were used to construct a codebook (see [Appendix 10: Codebook](#)), which was then used to code the remaining four transcripts (where each transcript was coded twice). All transcripts were stored in a single Google spreadsheet (see [Appendix 11: Coded Transcripts](#)), where each sheet represented one transcript (resulting in 12 total sheets). Each sheet's row represented a speaker (i.e., Interviewer or Participant), and each Participant row allowed for multiple columns for codes (e.g. 1-5 codes) to be identified.

Memos

Memos (see [Appendix 12: Team Memos](#)) were written by team members during three phases of the main data collection process: (1) after each 1:1 interview, the moderator and notetaker/observer wrote a brief reflection independently; (2) after each coding session (i.e., coded one transcript), the team member wrote a brief reflection; and (3) after each team member completed their assigned coding, they wrote analyses for each code from the codebook they used during the coding process. This resulted in each code having one to four summative analyses from team members.

Thematic Analysis

After reviewing all transcripts, memos, and individual analyses, team members convened to identify common themes and narratives.

3.3: “Draw The Experience” Activity

The “Draw The Experience” drawings created by participants were coded by team members, and the codes were affinity-mapped to reveal common themes (see [Appendix 13: Draw the Experience Analysis](#)).

4. Ethical Considerations

4.1: Measures for Protecting Participant Privacy

Before enrolling in the study, participants were informed about the confidentiality of information and data retention plans in the informed consent form. All participant data will be de-identified (e.g., participant ID). Identifying data will be deleted after the end of the quarter, and de-identified data will be retained indefinitely.

Data access will be restricted to the study team members and class instructors. Interview recordings and transcriptions will be collected via encrypted services (e.g., UW Zoom, otter.ai, or Rev.com).

4.2: Ethical Considerations

The study team acknowledges that discussions about marriage and relationships can be sensitive and uncomfortable topics for participants. Team members will be sensitive to participants and engage in active listening to create a safe environment to enable participant comfort. If a participant at any point wishes to pause or stop an interview or decline to answer a question, they are free to do so. Participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

Triangulated Findings - Key Themes

RQ1: What are the perceptions and assumptions of marriage held by Zillennials in the United States?

1.1: Influence of immediate and close family members

The influence of family members close to the individual was often named as the biggest factor in the perception of marriage held by Zillennials.

For example, Participant 1 mentioned her parents' marriage is the closest marriage they've been exposed to, so her perception of marriage is closely related. Since their marriage wasn't very happy, she didn't understand why people would choose to get married. Alternatively, Participant 4 saw a happy marriage modeled to them, so they have more positive views of marriage.

"The original feeling that I have toward marriage, is more directly from my parents, right. Because they're the like closest married people that I have been exposed to. But they don't seem really happy in their marriage. So that's my first impression of marriage. I feel like I don't understand this thing. I don't know why people get together. But being unhappy. Or even like, why are they getting with someone they don't like? I don't know." - Participant 1

"But I have seen a very happy marriage with my parents. So I assumed that that's something that I would want as well." - Participant 4

Participant 5 mentions their aunt and uncle's successful marriage left a strong impression on them and they aspire to have something similar in their future. Those who had close, healthy marriages modeled to them were more likely to perceive marriage as a positive decision.

"So I get really inspired by the marriages that I think are successful. Like my uncle and his wife, like my aunt. They, like I aspire to have a marriage like theirs." - Participant 5

1.2: Societal expectations and culture

Participants often mentioned the influence of their cultural background on their views of marriage. This includes expectations around the timing of marriage, the significance of marriage in their culture, and the societal norms related to marriage.

"The culture that I come from, it is expected that to get married at some point in my life, preferably before a certain age, so the expectation is both implicit and explicit. This makes it hard not to imagine myself getting married at some point" - Participant 6

Some participants highlighted the cultural influences on their views of marriage regarding divorce. Participant 3 described Hawaiian culture's casual view of marriage and divorce, where couples can separate without much drama. In contrast, Participant 6 described cultural views of marriage as a lifelong commitment, with divorce being taboo and rarely considered.

“Like, Hawaiian culture, marriage was like, very, very casual, um, divorce wasn't super dramatic, they would just decide as a couple to be like, Okay, well, bye. And then they would just separate, it wasn't a thing, like it was very, very casual.” - Participant 3

“I can't think of words, so become some sort of like a contract that you need to work towards not breaking, which is an interesting way to live your life as opposed to wanting to do something and doing it. That's how they've influenced my life by one day for sure, but my views on marriage, what else? So the concept of divorce is foreign and my culture. So we don't think of separation or divorce often and it's taboo to think about it or talk about it.” - Participant 6

While participants were very aware of societal/cultural norms and expectations, they often expressed a sense of personal agency and independence in their views of marriage. They recognized that there were expected stages of life and long-standing traditions (e.g., arranged marriages in India), but they did not necessarily feel like they had to abide by or rush to meet those expectations.

“And also, a lot of like notions and traditions in the Indian society were things that I didn't want to carry forward in our marriage. That's definitely something that influenced me and I think mainly, mainly most of my ideas of marriage are my own because at least back home not a lot of people like not friends like family doesn't agree with a lot of the same notions.” - Participant 2

“In India, it's a pretty big culture or marriage, it's something that's expected of everybody, it's a social norm, I would say, changing a bit now, but it's a social knob, and you do get married around your late 20s and early 30s. So I would say that's something that's, you know, put into your, like milestone kind of thing in life that you will get married on the stage. The reason I think about like happiness and family is because of how my parents are, and how I've seen their marriage. But I would not perceive marriage and gender to be like that, because I have seen a lot of not-so-bad marriages, and bad marriages as well. So I'm hoping that I'm smart enough, and trust myself enough to end up with somebody who would be more on the happy side and have a good marriage, and I trust myself enough to leave it if it's not a good marriage, that kind of stuff.” - Participant 4

1.3: Constructing meanings of marriage

Participants spoke about a variety of stages that all fit into their definitions of marriage. The process of finding someone to date, being in a relationship, the ritual of getting married, the wedding, and the actual marriage - were all perceived to be part of “marriage”. Additionally, many participants named daily living tasks and expectations as part of what they considered to be parts of a successful marriage. For example, Participant 5 named cooking, shared hobbies, and mutual respect as their definition of marriage as part of their Draw the Experience activity.

“And cooking. And eating is really important to me. So like shared time. So it's like, I don't think our schedules could be like totally different because that your time is important. Like, shared hobbies are important too, but like having independent spaces as well. Um, then intimacy is really important. Something that, like, I always prioritize, or at least as important to me. And then, like, knowing that fights are natural and normal. But it's important to have a process to resolve them. And just like, always mutual, like mutual respect and understanding. And then lastly, like, just have fun. Like, it's, I think, important to be with someone that helps you not take life too seriously. And to be able to like, laugh about things.” -Participant 5 (see [Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

Participants were likely to construct their own definition of marriage through their learned experiences of it. As they reach an age where it is appropriate to get married, they begin to make decisions about what getting

married means to them. In the quotes below, Participant 3 mentioned it involves assets, taxes, purchasing a house, and credit checks.

“in the US, it feels a little bit more high stakes, it feels like I have to make sure all the money is set, I have to make sure there's like a trust and a will involved I have to make sure we protect our assets, file our taxes together. Buy a house together and get our credit check. It's it's so like, complicated” - Participant 3

Participant 1 named the challenge of how to foster healthy relationships with their partner and children, possibly due to her own experiences of not having healthy relationships with her own.

“When I hear the word marriage I won't imagine, or I won't connect to some like a beautiful picture was like all the love and family members playing together with their smile on face. Not that kind of picture, but but more about like how to how to like Foster and a good family. It's like, how can I? What I can do to make my family like a better like, closer, more less less harmful? And hope that in my family that could be like. no one's vulnerable in this relationship or something.” - Participant 1

1.4: Marriage is a delicate balance

Participants' drawings reflect a theme of marriage as a delicate balance between both individuals. There may be power shifts and a range of factors that need to be balanced at all times to achieve harmony. For example, Participant 4 drew two people balancing on stacked rocks, and on top of the couple are factors like love and finances that they are constantly balancing together ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

“There's so much stuff and it can be negative, it can be positive, it can be neutral, like so much. But like the balancing part was the part to me that was the most important with the two people because I'm just like, if one of them starts just thinking about negative stuff, or just doing negative stuff, the balance completely falls apart. And you don't have a good foundation to balance on.” - Participant 3

Participant 6 drew two people starting out with light between them, representing the energy given to the dynamic ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)). Notice the reflection shows the light shifting toward one individual, illustrating the power shift. There are arrows labeled A/B in the reflection versus the illustration on top, referencing the fact that the balance may shift back and forth within a marriage over time.

“not necessarily just the focus but where the energy is like centered between the two people and it's shared equally by the two and they're both looking towards the same direction. And it's like they're in the same place, but like the energies have centered sometimes. And like if you think of it as wrong, or it could be anything sometimes it could be a successful trade between two partners, one could be having more success than the other. And it's easy to like feel cold or like lockdown, but this could also be something that I just love, where it's like centered towards one person, and the other person feels like drained out because they're still giving, they're not receiving. That's all centered. But I wouldn't say this is like a final state and that's why I think it's like a cycle but this happens, I think, in like long-term relationships.” - Participant 6

1.5: It's expected that marriage will involve 'ups and downs' and conflict.

Participants did not only idealize their view of marriage but shared that they expect marriage to involve challenges. Challenges were described in two forms: faced together or arising between partners.

The drawing from Participant 2 depicted a couple within a circle, facing challenges represented by up and down terrain ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

"It's gonna go up, down, left, right, like, whatever it's gonna go... Sometimes we're falling in like tumbling. And sometimes we're just like, looking forward." - **Participant 2**

Participant 2 explains that the circle holding both partners will have to endure challenges together on their journey. By nature of the terrain, experiencing those challenges may be unavoidable, but she explains that there is always a path forward.

The drawing from Participant 5 depicted many different components of marriage, including one depicting arguments that might arise between partners ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

"And then, like, knowing that fights are natural and normal. But it's important to have a process to resolve them. And just like, always mutual, like mutual respect and understanding." - **Participant 5**

Regardless of the form of challenge, both participants' drawings depicted a form of conflict resolution, whether it was showing that the path continues past the conflict peak or specifying that conflicts can be resolved through a process of "mutual respect and understanding".

1.6: Marriage merges two lives, blending shared experiences with individuality

There was also a theme of marriage as a joining of two separate families and lives. Participant 1 produced two pages of drawings. The first page illustrates two people sharing a meal together at the dinner table, and in the thought bubble above them, they are both thinking about the same things - their dog, house, and shared hobbies like movies. The second page illustrates two people, both with their individual lives (illustrated by 2 separate houses) joined by a heart in the middle ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

"It's like 2 people sitting together having dinner or something, and they just talk about everything in their life, their family, their work, their dog. The movie then, was the weather in their CD or something." - **Participant 1**

Participant 4's drawing shared similarities by depicting two people having separate lives, joined in the middle with a heart. The participant emphasized the importance of individuality and independence within a marriage ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

"And then I am a big proponent of, you know, you're having your own life, and everything else and friends and family and whatnot. And they are too, they are also having their own life and careers and money and whatnot. And you also share, then you share a home, maybe babies and money and whatnot. So for me, it's about that it's like, it's an intersection of two things, but doesn't mean your life becomes easy, you don't become hyper dependent and become one person, think you have your own life, they have their own life, but you choose to come together into the marriage." - **Participant 4**

Similar to Participant 4, Participant 5's drawing expressed the values of shared time and activities, emphasizing the importance of compatible schedules and shared hobbies. However, the participant also values independent spaces and emphasizes the importance of intimacy in a relationship ([Appendix 6: Draw the Experience Drawings](#)).

"So I have like, a day in the life and have a setting when I think of this stuff like a home. And cooking. And eating is really important to me. So like shared time. So it's like, I don't think our schedules could be like totally different because that your time is important. Like, shared hobbies are important too, but like having independent spaces as well. Um, then intimacy is really important. Something that like, I always prioritize, or at least as important to me." - **Participant 5**

RQ2: How do Zillennials in the United States use social media/technology to observe or participate in discourse about marriage?

2.1: Exposure to a wide spectrum of content on social media/technology

There is a vast amount of content on the internet, all aiming to portray the various facets of marriage. Participants explained navigating this plethora of information can be challenging as they try to discern what is personally relevant to them. It may also confuse if the content challenges their current perceptions of marriage. However, this abundance of information presents an opportunity to showcase the diverse spectrum of marriage and relationship experiences. Engaging with this content can enhance their exposure and knowledge, potentially leading to a shift in their perceptions of marriage. For instance, encountering positive examples online after experiencing negative familial influences can alter their views and understanding of marriage.

“What I see on TikTok is like really scary, I guess I should say. And I don't know if it's because like algorithms tend to push more like dramatic or reaction-inducing content, where you'll always see that the wife in the relationship is constantly being taken advantage of or undervalued. It's really negative. Really, really negative. I haven't seen a positive marriage post it takes forever and I was like, is that because of me? Because it's like my... And it's, I think it's given me a little bit more of a positive view after these discussions online, especially, especially because I feel like everybody else is talking online for all around my age. So it felt a lot more positive.” - Participant 3

Additionally, by being exposed to a wide spectrum of knowledge, we found that participants used that knowledge to piece together what they wanted in their own marriages and relationships and were able to learn from the experiences of others.

“And I know, everybody's like, well, you shouldn't be taking relationship advice from social media. It's like, we're not taking advice. We're just kind of like gathering information and interacting with other people based on their experiences, and how marriage is seen in other places and other cultures in other generations and how we can kind of like, hopefully, pick certain aspects of that information to kind of like build your own idea of what marriage is that suits your relationship, if that makes sense.” - Participant 3

Even though most of the content online is extreme in their views of marriage - it's either very for or against marriage. However, when we conducted interviews, most of the participants had positive outlooks for their own marriage and many had idealistic views of what their future marriage would look like with insights from what they've seen on social media and through technology (i.e. texting with friends).

2.2: Self-reflection after exposure to content

While participants may not express explicit influence from social media posts or technology, they expressed reflection on themselves or their relationships after seeing posts on social media or hearing about their friends getting married. Participants didn't think they were influenced, but provided examples of when they were:

“But when you are looking in the post, or stories from influencers, you will have like a little hope, or something like that. This exists like healthy and happy marriage did exist.” - Participant 1

We can also see proof of this theme in the previous theme's quotes. For example when Participant 3 said, “...pick certain aspects of that information to kind of like build your own idea of what marriage is that suits your relationship

if that makes sense.” It shows that the external content being viewed has influenced this participant’s perception of what a healthy relationship should look like and they may apply this internally to their own relationships.

2.3: Lurking and sharing with the immediate circle

Participants were more likely to “lurk” (meaning only observe without interaction with the content by liking or commenting) than to participate (meaning commenting or liking content) in online discourse.

*“I never comment. I never post. I’m like the ultimate stalker.” - **Participant 5***

Participant 2 specified that she prefers not to interact in online discourse because most of the content involves people she doesn’t know. If she interacts, it is with people she’s familiar with.

*“I’m only looking because I wouldn’t interact with like people that I don’t know, most of the active interaction or comments, and all of that only come with, like people I know.” - **Participant 2***

If participating in online discourse, participants would share within their immediate social circle, either digitally or verbally, or save it/bookmark social media content for themselves to refer to later.

*“I don’t think I’m somebody who interacts with social media in terms of commenting, I just maybe like it and save it to something for me to watch, because I got value from it. But I don’t think I’ve ever been someone who comments on stuff. So even my friends, I send them a DM saying, ‘Oh, my God, it is cute’. But I won’t comment saying.” - **Participant 4***

Impact

Our research on the perceptions of marriage among Zillennials in the United States reveals a complex interplay of factors shaping their views. Among the various factors influencing marriage views, our research highlights the significant influence of immediate and close family members, societal expectations, cultural factors, and the role of technology and social media in shaping these perceptions.

It is evident from our research that Zillennials already have a nuanced comprehension of marriage that surpasses traditional definitions. This challenges the notion of a linear progression in relationships and underscores the importance of considering diverse perspectives.

Our findings on Zillennials' perceptions of marriage can have a significant impact on people interested in this topic by normalizing their feelings and providing exposure to a range of perspectives. By highlighting diverse views and experiences, the research shows that it's okay to have varying feelings about marriage and relationships, alleviating feelings of worry or anxiety. Furthermore, the research offers valuable insights into what people think about marriage, broadening perspectives and deepening understanding of modern relationships. Overall, the research reassures individuals that they are not alone in their feelings about marriage and can serve as a catalyst for open and understanding dialogue about marriage in contemporary society.

Furthermore, our findings highlight the impact of decision fatigue and choice paralysis on commitment decisions among Zillennials, stemming from the abundance of information and options available through technology and social media. **This underscores the need for interventions and support systems tailored to the unique needs of this generation.** Additionally, our research suggests implications for social media and dating app designers, indicating a shift in the relationship mindset of Zillennials that designers should consider when developing their products. By incorporating insights from our study, **designers can create platforms that better align with the values and experiences of Zillennials, fostering healthy and meaningful connections.**

Qualitative methods were instrumental in capturing the depth and complexity of Zillennials' perceptions of marriage. Through thematic analysis and in-depth interviews, we were able to uncover nuanced insights that would have been difficult to capture through quantitative surveys alone. The qualitative approach allowed us to explore the lived experiences and personal narratives of our participants, **providing rich and detailed data that offer valuable insights for researchers, designers, policymakers, and practitioners working in the field of relationships and marriage.**

Future Work and Reflection

While we were unable to conduct a diary study to track changing perceptions over time due to time constraints, we suggest pursuing a longitudinal study in the future. This would allow us to track the evolving perceptions of marriage among Zillennials over an extended period, offering valuable insights into how these perceptions change with different life stages and experiences when allowing them to interact with spontaneous marriage content.

Additionally, our study had a relatively small sample size, with most participants identified as female. We also recruited more international students who lived in the US rather than individuals who grew up in the US, limiting the generalizability of our findings. To address this limitation, future research should aim to expand the sample size and include a more diverse range of participants who grew up in the US. This will ensure broader representation and provide more comprehensive insights into marriage perceptions among Zillennials in the US.

Moreover, our study included participants from diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups, revealing that societal background significantly influences marriage perceptions. To further explore this, **we suggest conducting a comparative analysis between Zillennials in the United States and other countries.** This comparative approach will help us understand the cultural and societal influences on marriage views more comprehensively. Building on our findings regarding the influence of societal factors, we intend to delve deeper into how factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status intersect with marriage perceptions among Zillennials. This intersectional analysis will provide a more nuanced understanding of how different identities shape views on marriage.

Overall, our research has opened up exploration and inquiry into the perceptions of marriage among Zillennials. By continuing to study this dynamic and multifaceted topic, we can better understand contemporary relationship trends and inform strategies for supporting healthy and fulfilling relationships in the digital age.

Appendix

- Appendix Item 1: [Online Observations Data Collection](#)
- Appendix Item 2: [Online Observations Affinity Diagram](#)
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